

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STARK SPEAKS OUT FOR EXPANDED STEM CELL RESEARCH

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-Fremont) voted for the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, a bill authorizing expanded federal funding for stem cell research and increasing the number of stem cell lines eligible for research. The bill continues the current ban on federal funding for any form of cloning and requires the informed consent of donors. It passed the House by a vote of 238-194.

The text of Stark's statement follows; to watch the speech online, click here: <http://www.house.gov/stark/video/stemcellspeech.mov>

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2005, because I believe that our research policies should be decided by scientists and doctors at the National Institutes of Health -- not by Karl Rove and the Christian Coalition.

"If you believe that it's morally superior to discard a single cell in a freezer rather than to use it to help millions of Americans with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and diabetes, and you ever have the opportunity to donate an embryo, then by all means refuse to do so. But don't tell my constituents that we can't alleviate their suffering because it might offend the Christian Right.

Don't tell my constituent Don Reed and his son Roman -- who is paralyzed from a high school football accident -- that the scientists working on stem cell research in California, thanks in large part to his efforts, won't be able to collaborate with the NIH.

"The extreme right wing, who already think they have the right to tell you who you can marry, what kind of birth control you use, and how you die, now think their moral superiority extends to the single-cell level.

"Beyond my outrage at this wholesale takeover by unenlightened zealots, I am saddened by this country's precipitous decline in the estimation of the rest of the world. If this bill doesn't pass, when the scientists of the world meet to discuss this rapidly advancing field, some of our key researchers will be stuck here, working with the few stem cell lines that somehow don't offend the Republican base.

"The opponents of this bill, many of whom are active members of the Flat Earth Society, will tell you that the U.S. has to show moral leadership, and that just because the overwhelming majority of the scientific community and the rest of the world supports this research doesn't

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mean it's the right thing to do. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't need a lecture from Tom DeLay on moral leadership. I don't look to the party that won't even acknowledge the existence of global warming for scientific leadership. I don't think the politicians who so eagerly decided they knew what was best for Terri Schiavo know much at all about life, dignity, suffering, or anything of the sort.

"I stand proudly with millions of Americans and on behalf of this country's tradition of scientific leadership in voting yes for this bill."